AMENDED CLAIM SET:

1. (currently amended) A denitrifying composition for microbially removing nitrate nitrogen from water, said composition comprising particles of calcium carbonate dispersed in sulfur ~~by heating and dispersing calcium carbonate in melted sulfur and solidifying the dispersion by cooling~~.

2. (currently amended) ~~The denitrifying composition as described in claim 1 wherein~~ A denitrifying composition for microbially removing nitrate nitrogen from water, said composition comprising particles of calcium carbonate and particles of a substance possessing cation exchange capacity ~~are~~ dispersed in sulfur.

3. (currently amended) ~~The denitrifying composition as described in claim 1 wherein~~ A denitrifying composition for microbially removing nitrate nitrogen from water, said composition comprising particles of calcium carbonate and particles of a microporous substance ~~are~~ dispersed in sulfur.

4. (previously amended) The denitrifying composition as described in any one of claims 1 to 3 wherein the ratio by weight of sulfur to calcium carbonate is 1:0.3 to 1:3.

5. (previously amended) The denitrifying composition as described in claim 3 comprising 10 parts by weight of sulfur, 10-15 parts by weight of calcium carbonate, and 1-3 parts by weight of a microporous substance.

6. (previously amended) The denitrifying composition as described in claim 1 wherein said sulfur is amorphous sulfur.

7. (previously amended) The denitrifying composition as described in claim 1 wherein the shape of said composition is granular, massive, or molded.

8. (previously amended) A denitrifying material comprising a mixture of a denitrifying composition as described in claim 1 and mineral fibers.

9. (previously amended) The denitrifying material as described in claim 8 wherein said mineral fibers are rock wool.

10. - 14. (cancelled).

15. (previously added) A method of decreasing the nitrate nitrogen concentration of water which comprises the step of contacting water containing nitrate ions with the composition of claim 1.

16. (previously added) The method of claim 15 for treating effluent selected from the group consisting of factory effluent, sewage effluent, and agricultural effluent, which method comprises the steps of placing the composition of claim 1 in a cage or a net to provide a denitrifying assembly and immersing the denitrifying assembly in said effluent.

17. (previously added) The method of claim 15 for treating effluent selected from the group consisting of factory effluent, sewage effluent, and agricultural effluent, which method comprises the steps of packing a column with the composition of claim 1 to provide a denitrifying assembly and passing said effluent through said denitrifying assembly.

18. (previously added) The method of claim 15 for treating effluent selected from the group consisting of factory effluent, sewage effluent, and agricultural effluent, which method comprises the steps of dispersing the

composition of claim 1 in a tank and bringing said effluent into contact with said composition in said tank.

19. (new) The denitrifying composition of claim 3, wherein said microporous substance is carbon derived from rice hull.

20. (new) The denitrifying composition of claim 2, wherein said substance possessing cation exchange capacity is kieselguhr.